

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 1 through 22 without prejudice and substitute the following new claims:

23. (New) A baseball handling system for batters comprising: a batting station having a hopper into which an allocated number of baseballs can be provided, a pitching machine spaced forwardly of the batting station, an open cage facing the pitching machine and in back of the batting station so that balls delivered from the pitching machine to the batting station can be collected adjacent to the batting station, and a baseball transport system having an inlet end adjacent said hopper at said batting station and an outlet end for delivering baseballs to the pitching machine said transport system including a ball escapement mechanism at said batting station for releasing balls seriatim from said hopper for transport to said pitching machine.

24. (New) The baseball handling system according to claim 23 wherein said baseball transport system includes a pneumatic baseball delivery tube for carrying baseballs from said escapement mechanism at the batting station to the pitching machine.

25. (New) The baseball handling system according to claim 23 wherein said open cage is so designed as to allow for uninterrupted flight of a struck baseball by the batter at said batting station into an open area in front of the batting station including areas of equal size to the left and the right sides of the pitching machine when viewed from the batting station.

26. (New) The baseball handling system according to claim 23 further including a controller located at the batting station adjacent to the hopper for the convenience of the batter in timing the transport of a baseball from the ball escapement mechanism to said pitching machine for delivery to the batting station.